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Re: Electronic References
Pilot Program

I would prefer that the USPTO **NOT** implement its plan to CEASE supplying printed copies of US patent references in official office actions.

The alternative being proposed by the USPTO to download such references is inconvenient and time consuming; and only transfers the responsibility to print such references from the USPTO to the applicant, which in practice is the attorney of record.

Although computers offer many advantages, they nevertheless **lack** the advantages of printed copies of documents, such as the US patent references. Such references must be analyzed in responding to office actions, and in preparing appeal briefs, and are always annotated by me to highlight various parts thereof for use in responding to office actions.

And, office actions typically include many US references, and many of which are applied in rejecting claims.

In a recent phone interview I conducted with an examiner, the examiner indicated that he did **NOT** have printed copies of the several references we needed to discuss, they were only available on his computer screen. The usefulness of the interview was seriously compromised by the inability of the examiner to promptly access individual references, and sections thereof; and move between different references.

Patent prosecution practice is quite difficult as it presently is; and the elimination of printed copies both for the examiners and the prosecuting attorneys would merely add to that difficulty.

Printed copies of all references, including the US references, are therefore **indispensable** in my practice of patent law (and, I should think by the examiners); and if the USPTO does not provide them, then the applicant is forced to do so.

Since the present fees charged by the USPTO in examining patent applications are already excessive, and the USPTO already has a clerical staff presently providing copies of the US references, it is my opinion, and request, that the present practice of supplying to applicants a full set of printed references being cited by the examiner **NOT** be ceased.

Very truly yours,

(email)

Francis L. Conte, Esq.